



State of Utah

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL



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What a Law Enforcement Officer Should Do to Initiate an AMBER Alert

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I. PURPOSE

The AMBER Alert is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement and local broadcasters to rapidly disseminate information about a suspect and victim to law enforcement agencies and the public when a child has been abducted.

II. CRITERIA

AMBER Alerts are initiated solely by Utah law enforcement agencies utilizing the Utah AMBER Alert Information form and by meeting the guidelines set forth on that form.

The criteria for an AMBER Alert are as follows:

- Is this believed to be a child abduction?
- Is this child 17 years of age or younger?
- Is the victim believed to be facing imminent danger, serious bodily injury or death?
- Is there information that could assist the public in the safe recovery of the victim or apprehension of a suspect?

Do not send an AMBER Alert if the answer is no to any of these questions. The alert is not to be used for cases involving custodial disputes or runaways that don't meet the criteria. Consider issuing an [Endangered Person Advisory](#) to inform law enforcement and the public about cases that don't meet the criteria for an AMBER Alert.

III. PROCEDURE FOR AGENCIES TO INITIATE AN AMBER ALERT

- Receive approval from your agency's administration to issue an AMBER Alert.
- Prepare the "UTAH AMBER ALERT" form via Utah Criminal Justice Information System (UCJIS) in full. (UAA message). A [Field AMBER Alert Information Form](#) is available to help you gather information.
- Contact the Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) at (801)965-4446 to verify it received the UAA alert via UCJIS.
- Enter the information (plus photo if available) with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) using the AMBER Alert Flag (AA).
- Make sure the "hotline" telephone banks are set up and staffed. Consider allocating additional resources from other law enforcement agencies.
- Obtain a photograph of the abducted child and/or suspect as soon as possible and e-mail it to AMBERALERT@UTAH.GOV. Agencies without e-mail can fax the photo to (801)965-4749.
- Appoint a Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle the press. Once the alert has been activated, media coverage can be overwhelming, especially for a small department. The PIO should be updated constantly to utilize the media as much as possible and receive the maximum exposure for the case.

IV. THE FOLLOWING WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE AMBER ALERT IS INITIATED

- The AMBER ALERT will be sent via UCJIS to all law enforcement in Utah and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).
- The alert will also be sent via UCJIS to broadcasters and members of the public who have registered to receive the alerts on their printers, e-mail, pagers or cell phones.

- The media will also receive the alert through the Emergency Alert System (EAS). Radio and TV broadcasters will air the alert every 15 minutes for the first three hours after the alert is initiated. BCI will contact your agency to find out if there are circumstances that would warrant asking broadcasters to air the alert beyond the first three hours.
- Traffic Operations Center (TOC) will activate all Utah Variable Message Signs (VMS) with the following information:

AMBER ALERT

Suspect vehicle and license or other information
TUNE TO RADIO NEWS

- Highway Advisory Radio transmitters and the Travel Information Line (511) will provide alert information.
- TRAK and Locater system will send thousands of flyers to law enforcement agencies and businesses throughout Utah and surrounding states.
- Alert information and photos will be made available at www.commuterlink.utah.gov and www.bci.utah.gov.
- Participating businesses with electronic message signs will display the alert information on their signs.
- Ports of Entry throughout the state will notify their officers.
- Utah Trucking Association will notify all of its agents in the field.
- America Online and other Internet providers will send the information to customers requesting to receive the alerts through e-mail, pager and other text message devices.

The AMBER Alert does not preclude any in-house procedures, policies or practices used by each law enforcement agency. All Nationwide AMBER Alert broadcasts can only be transmitted by the BCI using the required message key.

V. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- BCI can contact other states if an AMBER Alert needs to be broadcast outside of Utah. Call BCI at (801)965-4446. BCI can also provide training or training materials.
- The Utah Public Information Officer Association can provide a PIO to help your agency. The association can be reached at (801)541-8145 or (801)554-5422.
- [A Child Is Missing](#) will contact residents and businesses in the area where the child was last seen by using an automated telephone system. The service is free by calling the toll-free number (888) 875-ACIM (888-875-2246).
- [Team Adam](#) provides experienced child abduction investigators, technical assistance and equipment for free of charge to agencies during child abduction and sexual exploitation investigations. Call toll-free (800)THE-LOST (800-843-5678).
- [Project Alert](#) provides retired federal, state and local law enforcement officers who volunteer their time and expertise as unpaid consultants in missing or exploited child cases. All travel arrangements and costs are paid for by NCMEC. Call toll-free (800)THE-LOST (800-843-5678)
- [Laura Recovery Center](#) will help organize community ground searches. The non-profit organization offers its services for free. Call toll-free (866)898-5723.

VI. CANCELING THE AMBER ALERT

The initiating agency must cancel the AMBER Alert using the UCJIS UAA message. The agency must also call BCI at (801)965-4446 to verify that the AMBER Alert cancellation notice has been received via UCJIS. Your agency will be contacted by the Utah AMBER Alert Coordinator to set up an after-action review of the alert. The Utah AMBER Alert Advisory Committee reviews each alert to see if improvements can be made to keep the alerts immediate and effective. The AMBER Alert Plan is also tested every year on May 25 and September 19.